Does Halal Certification Matter?

The Influence of Polarity in Religious Understanding on Preference for Halal Certification in Indonesia

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Keywords

Religious understandings, conservative, moderate, progressive, halal certification

Abstract

This study investigates the impact of religious understanding on preferences for halal certification among Indonesian Muslims, highlighting the nuanced relationship between faith and consumer behavior. By 2023, Indonesia had witnessed a substantial rise in halal-certified products, reaching 3,237,167 products that have been certified halal, with 58.5% being self-declared as halal and the remaining 41.5% being regular halal certificates. This number has more than tripled since 2019, when there were just 963,411 halal-certified products. This rapid growth reflects not only regulatory developments but also a deepening public consciousness regarding halal compliance, shaped by religious beliefs. Previous studies have not explicitly addressed the concept of halal as understood by the Indonesian Muslim community, which possesses a diverse range of religious interpretations. This article reveals the typology of Indonesian Muslim religious understanding and its influence on preference for halal certification. This research used quantitative methods by distributing questionnaires to Indonesian Muslim respondents with conservative, moderate, and progressive religious categorizations. Respondents in this study were aged 18-60 years, and included both men and women. Data were analyzed using the ANOVA technique using SPSS 29.0.1. The results show a significant value (0.008), indicating a difference in preference for halal certification between conservative, moderate, and progressive groups, with the highest attachment average amongst conservative Muslims (33.46).

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1. Introduction

This article explores how differing religious perspectives impact the preference for halal certification in Indonesia. Religious understanding is one of the main factors in shaping Muslim consumer behavior, especially in purchasing a product. Therefore, halal discourse is important for Muslim consumers to pay attention to because a product's halalness cannot be determined just by smelling, touching, or tasting it (Dzukroni, 2022; Fischer, 2011). In this context, a halal certificate is an indicator that reflects the conformity of a product with halal principles in Islamic teachings (Yakin & Christian, 2021). Therefore, halal certification is not just a formality but reflects producers' awareness of the needs and beliefs of Muslim consumers in Indonesia (Kurniawati & Savitri, 2019).

Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world, and is recorded as having a very high index of halal awareness (94.91). The high halal awareness of Indonesian Muslim consumers has four key factors: religious beliefs (96.61), health reasons (89.83), halal labels (84.71), and exposure (78.72) (Kurniawati & Savitri, 2019). A Muslim person's religious understanding plays a crucial role in determining the extent to which halal certification is considered a determining factor in purchasing decisions about food products (Hayani, 2019). This understanding includes halal principles, trust in halal certification institutions, and how religious values influence Muslim consumers' preferences for food products (Sururi, 2021). By delving deeper into the influence of Muslim thought, this research can provide more comprehensive insight into the factors that influence the importance of halal certificates in the context of decisions to purchase food products.

The results of previous research on halal certificates categorized into three tendencies: halal awareness (Bashir, 2019; Kurniawati & Savitri, 2019; Vizano *et al.*, 2021), preferences in product purchasing decisions (Firdayetti *et al.*, 2022; Hong *et al.*, 2020; Mahbubi *et al.*, 2019; Meixner *et al.*, 2018), and the effect of certificates on expanding market share (Masruroh, 2020; Salindal, 2019; Wasim Akram, 2020). However, this research has not explicitly discussed the typology of Muslim religious understanding and its influence on the importance of halal certificates. This paper aims to complement the research results on halal awareness, Muslim preferences, and the need to expand halal certification. The problems discussed this paper are: (1) How does Muslim thought influence the importance of halal certification in Indonesia on Muslims' decisions to purchase food products? and (2) Are there differences in preference for halal certification between conservative, moderate, and progressive Muslims in Indonesia?

Consumers' decisions to prioritize products which are certified as halal can be seen as a concrete step in supporting the principles of justice and adherence to religious norms. This is in line with research results that state that Indonesian Muslims have a very high level of halal awareness (Kurniawati & Savitri, 2019). In other words, Indonesian Muslims know that halal status is an essential indicator of consumer behavior. Halal certification in the form of a halal label attached to products is the most accessible indicator and symbol that a Muslim can rely on, because he does not need to confirm the production process and raw materials.

Nevertheless, the author sees the need for further studies regarding the results of this research. It is not uncommon to find individuals and groups who think that halal certification is nothing more than a mere industrial interest or at least is only following trends and directions from the government. On the other hand, there are also many people who think that halal certification is a must for every product to be consumed. The author hypothesizes that this is motivated by a individual's religious understanding. Consequently, this research conducts a thorough examination and analysis of how religious understanding shapes Indonesian Muslims' views on the significance of halal certification, categorizing individuals into three main groups: conservative, moderate, and progressive.

2. Literature Review

A Muslim person's religious understanding occupies an important position in determining their religious behavior (Raharjo *et al.*, 2021). One interpretation of Muslim religious understanding can be seen in everyday consumer behavior. Muslims tend to prioritize food products that are guaranteed to be halal. This understanding includes aspects such as the halal nature of ingredients used, production processes that are clean from non-halal contamination, and compliance with halal procedures established by religious authorities. More than just physical needs, the choice of food products for Muslim consumers reflects their commitment to halal principles, and products that meet these standards are considered a choice in accordance with religious guidance (Budiman & Annisa, 2019; Dzukroni, 2023a; Dzukroni & Aniq, 2023; Syahrulludin *et al.*, 2022).

Muslims' understanding of choosing food products also includes ethical and environmental considerations. The concept of tayyib (good, clean) in Islam encourages broaderthinking about sustainability and justice in the food supply chain (Izberk-Bilgin, 2012; Marsiati et al., 2022). Muslim consumers who understand this principle will tend to choose products that are not only halal but also produced

with animal welfare, environmental conservation, and social justice in mind. Thus, the choice of food products for Muslim consumers is not only ceremonial but also reflects a holistic awareness of the impact of products on society, the environment, and personal health. This understanding provides a strong basis for the influence of Muslim thought on the importance of halal certification as an indicator of product conformity with Islamic religious and ethical values, which include halal, ethical, and sustainability aspects. It also reflects the important changes in power and wealth, as halal certification means driving figh to economic sectors (Calder, 2020).

Muslim consumers' choice of food products is reflected across a diverse spectrum of thought, from conservative to progressive, with a large number of individuals likely identifying themselves as moderate (Iqbal & Mabud, 2019; Zuhdi, 2018). These differences in thinking include aspects of halal, ethical, sustainable, and religious influences in the context of product selection. Conservative thinking in selecting food products tends to emphasize strict adherence to halal principles in Islamic teachings. They often avoid products that are deemed not to meet strict halal standards and may prefer products with halal certificates issued by trusted institutions (Ichwan, 2013).

On the other hand, progressive Muslim tend to accommodating tolerance, political ethics, inclusivism, and pluralism in religious practice (Qodir & Singh, 2022). The progressive-minded Muslim consumers may take a more contextual and adaptive approach to food product selection. They still pay attention to halal aspects but also tend to consider ethical, sustainability, and social justice factors. They are more open to a more flexible interpretation of the halal concept. Moderate Muslim consumers, on the other hand, strike a balance between conservatism and progressivity (Nasikhin *et al.*, 2022; Raharjo & Yahya, 2023). Apart from that, moderate Muslim groups also continue to intensify efforts to deradicalize religion (Sukarman *et al.*, 2019). They may prioritize halal as the main factor in selecting food products while remaining aware and appreciative of ethical and sustainable values (Jubba *et al.*, 2021; Pektas, 2021). A deeper understanding of this spectrum of thinking is important for designing marketing, production, and policy strategies that can meet the diverse needs and preferences of Muslim consumers around the world.

Consumers always have reasons for making purchases (Dzukroni, 2023b). Kotler explains that purchasing decisions are part of consumer behavior, namely an individual or group's attitude in selecting, purchasing, or using goods, services,

ideas, or experiences in order to satisfy their wants and needs (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). In marketing practice, product, price, promotion, and place integration strategies are important things. These four things can increase consumer interest in buying products offered by manufacturers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018; Permata Sari, 2021). Recent discussions in the discourse on product purchasing decisions include discussions on whether halal labels are a factor in product purchasing decisions is; in fact, some purchases ignore the four marketing factors above as long as there is a halal label on the product (Sonia Cipta Wahyurini & Trianasari, 2020; Sri Ernawati & Iwan Koerniawan, 2023; Wulandari, 2021).

Halal products are the second stage of halal evolution according to Tieman's theory of halal evolution. There are four stages of halal evolution: trust in fellow Muslims (Muslim company), halal products, halal supply chains, and halal value chains. Indonesia is, in fact, still in the second stage. The halal product stage is marked by the legality of a halal certificate (Dzukroni & Afandi, 2022; Tieman, 2011). We can prove this by the increasing number of halal labels displayed on street vendors' stalls across the nation. Halal certification in Indonesia is currently the authority of the Halal Product Guarantee Organizing Agency (BPJPH) in collaboration with the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI, as the provider of halal fatwa) and the Halal Inspection Institute (LPH), assisted by the Halal Product Process Assistance Agency (LP3H) as auditors, verifiers and validators. In addition to MUI and its Fatwa Commission, the Fatwa Committee, which consists of academics and ulama and is responsible to the Ministry of Religion, also has the authority to determine fatwa on halal products in Indonesia.

3. Methods

2.1. Research Sample and Design

This article is based on quantitative research, with data collected through questionnaires answered by Muslim respondents as consumers. The questionnaires focused on religious thoughts, perceptions of the importance of halal certification, and purchasing decisions. This research focuses on both male and female Muslim consumers living in Indonesia, with an age range of 18-60 years. This paper classifies Indonesian Muslims based on their respective typologies of religious understanding. There are three typologies used in this research: conservative, moderate, and progressive (Ichwan, 2013; Nurmila, 2019; Qodir & Singh, 2022; Ramadhan & Fuad, 2023; Siraj, 2014; Zuhdi, 2018). This paper looks at the extent to which the typology of individuals' religious understanding influences their

preference for halal certification.

As explained, this article classifies Muslim religious understanding into three groups. The distinctions between conservative, moderate, and progressive Muslims can be understood through their approaches to Islamic teachings, interpretations of sacred texts, and responses to contemporary social and political contexts. Conservative Muslims typically uphold traditional interpretations of Islam, emphasizing strict adherence to the Quran and Hadith while resisting changes that contradict original teachings. In contrast, moderate Muslims adopt a more flexible stance, valuing fundamental Islamic principles while remaining open to contemporary interpretations that align with universal values such as human rights and pluralism. Progressive Muslims further advocate for reform and reinterpretation of Islamic teachings to address modern issues like gender equality, social justice, and environmental concerns, employing critical and contextual methods of interpretation. Collectively, these perspectives illustrate the diverse spectrum of thought within contemporary Islam, highlighting the varying responses to religious tenets and modern challenges (Brooks et al., 2020; Esposito, 2005a, 2005b; Qodir & Singh, 2022; F. Rahman, 2009).

Therefore, the independent variables (X) in this study are conservative Muslims, moderate Muslims, and progressive Muslims. The preference for halal certification is used as the dependent variable (Y). The sample was selected randomly through a convenience sampling model. The exact number of Muslim consumers in Indonesia cannot be know, so this paper is non-probable and cannot represent the general population. Questionnaires were given to Muslim consumers (men and women) aged 18-60 years, with a quota of 93 volunteer respondents. The questionnaire was designed with structured questions that cover variables relevant to the research.

We construct six indicators to identify Muslim religious understanding. The conservative religious understanding indicators are: 1) sharia values must be implemented strictly; 2) women's role in public space must comply with traditional norms; 3) religion should not be eroded by the current of modernity; 4) only Islam is the true religion; 5) minorities must submit to the majority; and 6) food given by non-Muslim neighbors must be refused politely (Andrean & Harahap, 2022; Gesink, 2009; Jati & Yilmaz, 2023; Osman, 2017). The moderate religious understanding indicators are: 1) sharia values can be implemented in accordance with the current context; 2) it is necessary to provide equal rights and opportunities for men and women in public spaces; 3) religion and modernity can coexist; 4) all religions should be respected, but Islam is the main religion; 5) minority rights

must be respected and protected; and 6) food given by non-Muslim neighbors should be accepted, regardless of their religion (Alvian & Ardhani, 2023; Dzukroni & Aziz, 2023; Islam & Khatun, 2015; Islamy, 2022; Kamali, 2016). The progressive religious understanding indicators are: 1) sharia values must be adapted to current developments; 2) there should be a change in the role of women in accordance with the needs of the times; 3) religion must adapt to modern values; 4) acknowledge the truth and positive values in all religions; 5) minorities have equal rights and need to be fully recognized; and 6) food provided by non-Muslim neighbors can be accepted happily without needing to ensure its compliance with halal principles (Farid Esack, 2018; Luhuringbudi *et al.*, 2021; A. Rahman, 2024).

2.2. One Way ANOVA Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using the One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) method to analyze variables because the number of factors is one and the number of groups is more than two. The Likert scale was used to determine the intensity and value of a variable. Preference for halal certifications is the dependent variable, while religious understanding is a factor with three levels (conservative, moderate, and progressive). The requirement for carrying out the ANOVA test is that the data to be analyzed must be normally distributed and homogeneous. The statistical hypothesis in this article is: 1) H1: There are differences in preference for halal certification between conservative, moderate, and progressive groups; and 2) H0: There is no difference in preference for halal certification between conservative, moderate, and progressive groups. This research uses a significance level of α = 0.05. The decision criteria in this research are that H0 is rejected if F count \geq F table.

To obtain results in hypothesis testing, the One Way ANOVA Test was used. The basis for decision-making in ANOVA analysis is: 1) If the significance value (Sig) > 0.05, then the average is the same; 2) If the significance value (Sig) <0.05, then the averages are different. Post Hoc Tests were also used. The Tukey HSD test was used as a further ANOVA test. Tukey HSD itself is a multiple comparison test to determine whether the preference for the halal certificate is significant in the amount of variance analysis. The conditions used in this test are: 1) If the significance value (Sig) is > 0.05, then the difference in the average preference for halal certification is not significant, and 2) If the significance value (Sig) <0.05, then the difference in the average preference for halal certification is significant.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Data Description

Table I presents a descriptive summary of respondent characteristics according to gender and domicile. The results showed that of the 93 respondents, there were 34 men (37%) and 59 women (63%). The ages of the respondents were in the range of 18-60 years. There were 38 respondents from Central Java Province, 15 people from East Java Province, 11 people from West Java Province, nine people from D.I. Yogyakarta, six people from DKI Jakarta Province, two people from North Sumatra Province, two people from NTT Province, two people from South Sulawesi, two people from NTB, one person from Aceh Province, one person from Bali, one person from Bengkulu Province, one person from Lampung Province, and one person from East Kalimantan. Based on indicators of religious understanding, it was recorded that 37 respondents had conservative tendencies, 37 respondents had moderate tendencies, and 19 respondnets had progressive tendencies.

Table 1. Respondent Data

Respondent Typology	Frequency	(%)
Gender		
Man	34	37
Woman	59	63
Age		
18-60	93	100
Domicile		
Central Java	39	41.90
East Java	15	16.10
West Java	11	11.80
Yogyakarta	9	9.70
Jakarta	6	6.60
Aceh	1	1.10
North Sumatera	2	2.60
Bengkulu	1	1.10
Lampung	1	1.10
NTT	2	2.60
Bali	1	1.10
NTB	2	2.60
South Sulawesi	2	2.60
East Kalimantan	1	1.10
Religious Understanding		
Conservative	37	39.80
Moderate	37	39.80
Progressive	19	20.40

We classified religious understanding by using the six indicators mentioned before, which were then transformed into questions that respondents have the authority to answer. The SPSS 'descriptive' output shows differences in the average preference for halal certificates from the three religious understanding groups as follows:

- a. The average preference for halal certification for the conservative group is 33.46.
- b. The average preference for halal certification for the moderate group is 30.73.
- c. The average preference for halal certification for the progressive group is 31.00.

Thus, descriptively, it can be concluded that the conservative group has the highest average preference for halal certification, with 33.46. The data presented in Table 2 indicates the average (mean) attachment of each religious understanding group to halal certification. The conservative group (37 respondents) has a mean score of 33.46. The moderate group (37 respondents) has a mean score of 30.73. Meanwhile, the progressive group (19 respondents) shows a mean score of 31.00. Therefore, when arranged in order, the conservative group demonstrates the highest preference for halal certification, followed by the progressive group, with the moderate group exhibiting the lowest level of attachment.

95% Confidence **Interval for Mean** Std. Lower Upper **Std Error** Minimum Maximum N Mean Deviation **Bound** Bound Conservative 33.46 3.271 .538 32.37 34.55 28 40 37 Moderate 30.73 3.949 29.41 32.05 20 37 37 649 **Progressive** 19 31.00 4.807 1.103 28.68 33.32 19 38 Total 31.03 32.71 40 93 31.87 4.063 .421 19

Table 2. Descriptive Data

4.2. Normality and Homogeneity Test

Table 3. Normality Test Output

	Kolmogriv-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Conservative	.125	37	.151	.952	37	.1
Moderate	.120	37	.194	.194	37	.1
Progressive	.132	19	.200*	.956	19	.5

^{*.} This is a lower bound of the true significance

Based on the data shown by the SPSS output for tests of normality, it can be concluded that the data comes from a normally distributed population. The Shapiro Wilk normality test data shows that the significance is greater than 0.05.

Apart from that, based on the SPSS output for tests of homogeneity of variances, a significance value (Sig) of 0.344 was obtained. Because the significance value is 0.344 > 0.05, it can be concluded that the four groups of religious understanding compared in this study are the same or homogeneous. In this way, the assumption of homogeneity in the one-way ANOVA test is met.

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Halal	Based on Mean	1.078	2	90	34
Certification	Based on Median	.995	2	90	37
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.995	2	76.587	37
	Based on trimmed mean	1.050	2	90	35

Table 4. Homogeneity Test Output

4.3. ANOVA Test

This research uses a one-way ANOVA test to carry out comparison tests of two or more means. The test proves whether the three groups have the same average or not. Based on the SPSS ANOVA output, the significance value is 0.008 or smaller than 0.05. By considering the initial decision making, which states that if the significance value is <0.05, then the average of the three groups of religious understanding is significantly different.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	155.965	2	77.983	5.151	.008
Within Groups	1362.486	90	15.139		
Total	1518.452	92			

Table 5. ANOVA Output

4.4. Post Hoc Test

In order to test whether there is an average difference in preference for halal certificates, it is necessary to ensure whether the significance value of the SPSS output results that have been carried out is more than 0.05. Based on the SPSS Multiple Comparison output, it is known that the significance value is 0.009 < 0.05, so it can be concluded that the preference for halal certification of conservative and moderate groups is different and significant. Other data shows that the known

significance value is 0.70 > 0.05, so it can be concluded that the preference for halal certification of the conservative and progressive groups is the same. Likewise, the data shown is a comparison of the moderate and progressive groups. A significance value of 0.967 > 0.05 was obtained, so the difference in the averages of the two groups was not significant.

(I) Religious Understanding	(J) Religious Understanding	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	
Conservative	Moderate	2.730*	.905	.009	
	Progressive	2.459	1.098	.070	
Moderate	Conservative	-2.730*	.905	.009	
	Progressive	-270	1.098	.967	
Progressive	Conservative	-2.459	1.098	.070	
	Moderate	.270	1.098	.967	

Table 6. Multiple Comparisons Output

4.5. Average Similarity of Preference for Halal Certification

The average similarity data in this study was obtained from the Tukey HSD output. The data that has been obtained shows that:

- a. Subset 1 shows data on preference for halal certification from moderate and progressive groups. The average for the two groups is the same (no significant difference).
- b. Subset 2 shows data on preference for halal certification from progressive and conservative groups. The average for the two groups is the same (no significant difference).

		Subset for alpha= 0.05		
Religious Understanding	N	1	2	
Moderate	37	30.73		
Progressive	19	31.00	31.00	
Conservative	37		33.46	
Sig.		.963		

Table 7. Tukey HSD Output

Means for groups in homogenous subsets are displayed.

- a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size= 28.120
- b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used.

 Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

Based on the series of ANOVA tests and post-ANOVA tests carried out, it can be concluded that the average preference for halal certification by conservative and moderate groups is different, while the average preference for halal certification by the progressive group is the same. Thus, the religious understanding variable only has a significant effect on the average difference in preference for halal certification for conservative and moderate groups.

Previous research found that the level of halal awareness in the Indonesian Muslim community reached a very high level, with an index score of 94.91 (Kurniawati & Savitri, 2019). However, research had not yet explored the typology of Indonesian Muslim religious understanding, which is very diverse. This research categorizes the typology of Indonesian Muslim religious understanding into three groups, namely conservative, moderate, and progressive. It was done as a form of further research on Muslims' preference for halal certificates.

This article places halal certification as the research object, rather than halal status in general, because Indonesian Muslims have different definitions of halal. For example, Zailani (2023) concluded that the Muslim population of the city of Solo has a different definition of halal from the government, which seems strict and bureaucratic. Zailani called this 'organic halal'. As Indonesian society has the largest Muslim population in the world, with the highest level of religiosity in the world (Pew Research Center, 2018), it is not surprising that halal awareness is high. However, the next question is what version of halal they are aware of and believe in. This research focuses on the halal version stated in the halal certificate issued by the government.

Based on the typology of Indonesian Muslim religious understanding, there are differences in preference for halal certification between conservative, moderate, and progressive groups. This research found that HO is rejected, which means the differences are significant. The data shows that the conservative group has the highest average preference for halal certification (33.46), followed by the progressive group (30.73) then the moderate group (31.00). This finding shows that conservative groups dominate the halal certification market in Indonesia, although the difference is not very significant. The government of Indonesia should make more effort to ensure halal certification can reach more progressive and moderate groups, especially moderate groups. The Indonesian Ministry of Religion, as the front guard of the halal certificate discourse in Indonesia, has the ambition to mainstream religious moderation. It is appropriate for the halal certification discourse to be progressed in such a way so that it continues to run on a moderate track.

5. Conclusion

This study discusses how differences in religious understanding influences Muslim individuals' preference for halal certification in Indonesia. It is one of the few studies that does so in the Indonesian context. The high level of preference for halal certification by conservative groups shows that the halal certification discourse in Indonesia has a conservative impression, even though the government, through the Ministry of Religion, continues to prioritize the value of religious moderation.

This research has provided a deeper understanding of the influence of Muslim thinking on the perception of the importance of halal certification in decisions to purchase food products. In addition, this research contributes to the discourse surrounding conservatism, which is often associated with extremism or radicalism. The findings indicate that conservatism is positioned between being increasingly accepted by the general public and either solidifying or blending with mainstream Islam.

These results can serve as a foundation for producers and the government to develop halal certification discourse that is more effectively targeted at moderate groups, thereby avoiding a conservative appearance. This study is expected to contribute to the development of halal projects in Indonesia, serving as a consideration for policy making by both the Ministry of Religion, which actively promotes moderate Islam, and halal certifying agencies. By using a convenience sampling model and being non-probable, the results of this article cannot represent the population of Muslim consumers in Indonesia as a whole. However, this research can open a new perspective in the study of Muslim consumers and halal certification. Therefore, the researcher suggests that future researchers develop this research by taking a larger sample.

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